

## ***A Message from Father Vincent***

My Dear Friends in Christ:

Once again, Happy New Year!!! This coming Sunday marks the end of the Christmas Season with the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. Next week, we embark upon Ordinary Time together. There is a beautiful quote that “Every new beginning comes from other beginnings end,” and it speaks to the circular nature of life. Things begin. Things end. The end of one thing leads to the beginning of another. The poem “The Work of Christmas” by Howard Thurman speaks so beautifully of this:

**When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.**

Ordinary Time is actually a beautiful and important season in the Church! We spend more weeks in Ordinary Time than any other season in the Church by far. This season is also filled with important feast days, such as Corpus Christi, the Assumption of Mary, All Saints Day, All Souls, and Christ the King – and also the feast days of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Transfiguration, and Our Blessed Mother’s birthday.

“Ordinary Time” gets its title from the word ‘ordinal’. Ordinal means ‘numbered’, and ‘ordinary time’ simply means that it is ‘numbered time’. Thus, the title “Ordinary Time” wasn’t meant to refer to this period in the liturgical calendar as being standard, usual, customary, or (as I used to think) boring.

The focus of Ordinary time, and the theme of many of the Mass readings, is the life and walk of Jesus. Advent and Christmas focus on the lead up to and birth of Our Lord, while Lent and Easter focus on and lead up to and Passion of Our Lord. Ordinary Time, on the other hand, focuses primarily on the life and ministry of Jesus, those days, and years when the Son of God lived and walked among us.

As we celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lord’s Baptism, I have the blessing of preaching about the beginning of our spiritual lives when we called to mind our own baptisms – when we became Children of God and when Christ claimed us for Himself. This weekend, I will ask everyone to celebrate their baptisms each year. Look at your baptismal certificates or call the Church in which you were baptized and find out your baptism date. Put that date in your calendar and remember that date as the date that you received God’s wonderful blessings of forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation.

Our baptisms are the seed of faith planted in each one of us that needs to be nurtured and needs to grow through prayer, through the sacraments and through a constant dialogue with God the Father.

Like that mighty oak tree that I spoke about last week, the roots of faith with sustain us through the struggles and difficulties of life. Think of the oak tree as our lives. It grows and grows. And think of the elements – the wind and the snow and the rain as the struggles in our lives. Now think of the oak tree's roots as our spiritual lives. The bigger and the deeper the roots, the deeper our faith. These roots represent our lives in Christ that start from that tiny seed planted in each one of us at our baptisms. They are unwavering and unaffected when we have a strong faith.

May the Peace of Christ be with you always.

With love and deep appreciation for all of you,

*Father Vincent*

*Father Vincent (baptism date = March 6, 1966)*